

Appl. No. 10/708,109  
Amdt. dated December 30, 2004  
Reply to Office action of November 03, 2004

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-16 remain active in the case. The independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which applicants regard as their invention. No new  
5 matter is introduced.

Claims 1, 4-5, 7, 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) or 103(a) for reason of record that can be found on pages 2-4 in the Office action identified above, which is Part of Paper No./Mail Date 20041021.

To overcome the 102 rejections, claim 1 has been amended mainly based on  
10 paragraph [0015] and FIG. 2 of the present application. Downey et al. (US 6,717,270) teach an integrated circuit die including active I/O circuitry in a substrate, a plurality of metal interconnect layers, an insulating layer, a first pad, and a second pad. Cook et al. teach a serpentine chip crack stop for interrupting propagation of delamination cracks in thin film layers. Saito et al. teach a semiconductor integrated circuit device with vertically stacked conductor interconnections. All of the cited prior art documents teach away from the limitations that the integrated circuit comprises "at least one electrically isolated damascened metal frame fabricated in a second IMD layer under said first IMD layer, said damascened metal frame, having four sides and dimensions corresponding to peripheral contour of overlying said intermediate metal layer exhibits ability in  
15 counteracting mechanical stress exerted on said bondable metal pad during bonding, being disposed directly under said damascened intermediate metal layer; and a portions of active circuit components of said integrated circuit disposed directly under said damascened metal frame", as required by the amended claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration of the amended claim 1 is politely requested. As claims 2-11 are  
20 dependent upon claim 1, they should be allowable if claim 1 is allowed. Reconsideration of claims 2-11 is politely requested.

Claims 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) for reason of record that can

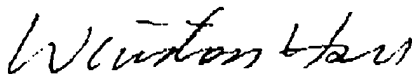
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be found on pages 5-8 in the Office action identified above, which is Part of Paper No./Mail Date 20041021.

To overcome the 103 rejections, claim 12 has been amended based on paragraphs [0015] and [0016], and FIG. 2. Saito et al. teach away from the limitations that the integrated circuit comprises "an electrically isolated first damascened copper frame fabricated in a second IMD layer under said first IMD layer, said damascened copper frame, having four sides and dimensions corresponding to peripheral contour of overlying said intermediate metal layer exhibits ability in counteracting mechanical stress exerted on said bondable metal pad during bonding, being disposed directly under said damascened intermediate copper layer" and "an electrically isolated second damascened copper frame encompassed by said first damascened copper frame", as required by the amended claim 12. Accordingly, reconsideration of the amended claim 12 is politely requested. As claims 13-16 are dependent upon claim 1, they should be allowable if claim 1 is allowed. Reconsideration of claims 13-16 is politely requested.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Sincerely yours,



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